

# TOPS Stewardship Update 2020

TOPS Working Committee  
Gillian Rossi



# Discoveries at Corral Bluffs

a.k.a. The Paleontological Center of the Universe



"We knew it was a once-in-a-lifetime discovery when it happened."

-Ian Miller, Ph.D. (Paleobotanist)

"I'll be working on the fossils from this discovery for the rest of my life. The discovery will keep lots of scientists busy for centuries to come."

-Tyler Lyson, Ph.D. (Vertebrate Paleontologist)

"I hope these and future discoveries lead to the community gaining a sense of wonder and appreciation for the rich prehistoric, historical and biological treasures contained in right in their own backyard."

-Sharon Milito (Made the first critical find at Corral Bluffs, *Spirit of the Springs* recipient)





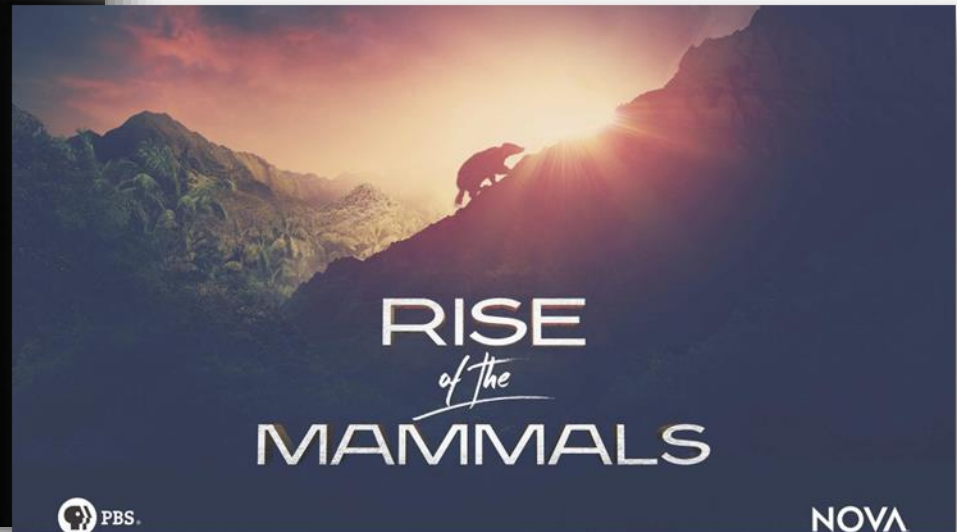
# Discoveries at Corral Bluffs

*a.k.a.* The Paleontological Center of the Universe



*Loxolophus*

## New TOPS mascot?



# Fulltime Staff



**Park Rangers:** Stephanie Fields, Hayley Noneman, Madison Peddy, Wesley Hermann, Joshua Joyner, Caroline Ogdahl, Michael Bowman



# Fulltime Staff



**Trail Project Specialist – Dan Allen**



**Park Ranger Supervisor – Gillian Rossi**

# Winter '19-'20 Seasonal Staff



**3 Resource Technicians:**  
Lindsay Williams, Jill  
Blackmon, David Reynolds

**1 Education Technician:**  
Anna Eick

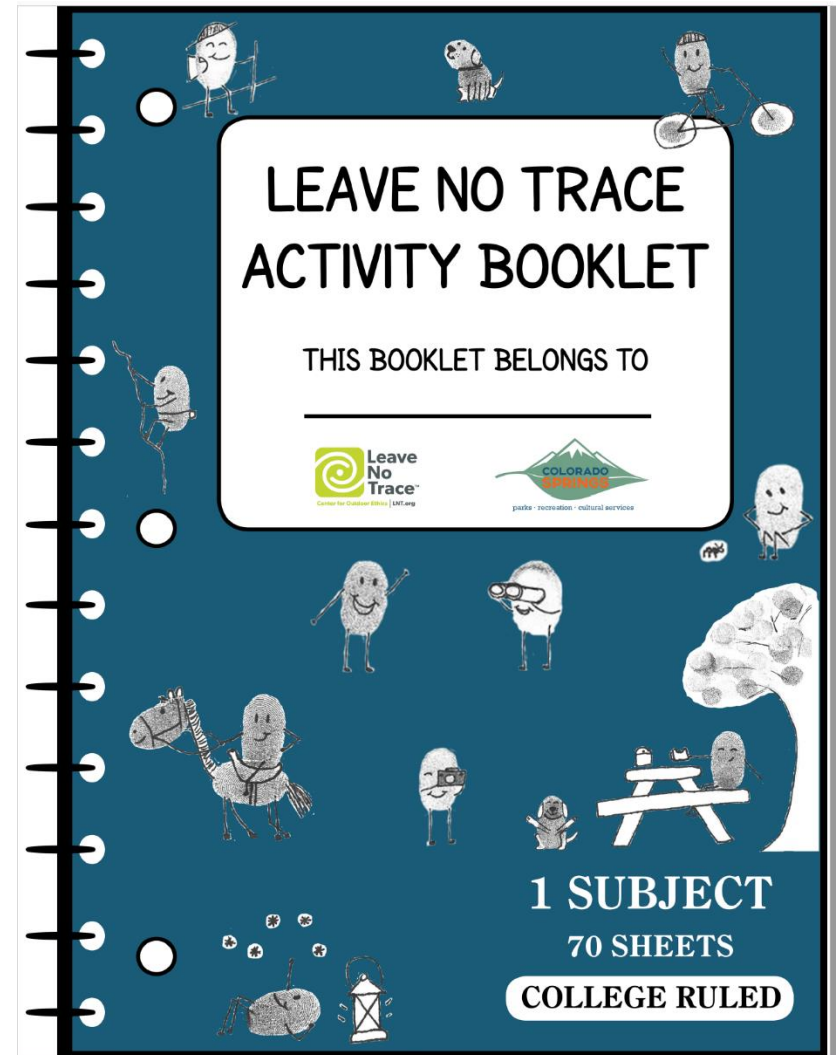


# Education Technician

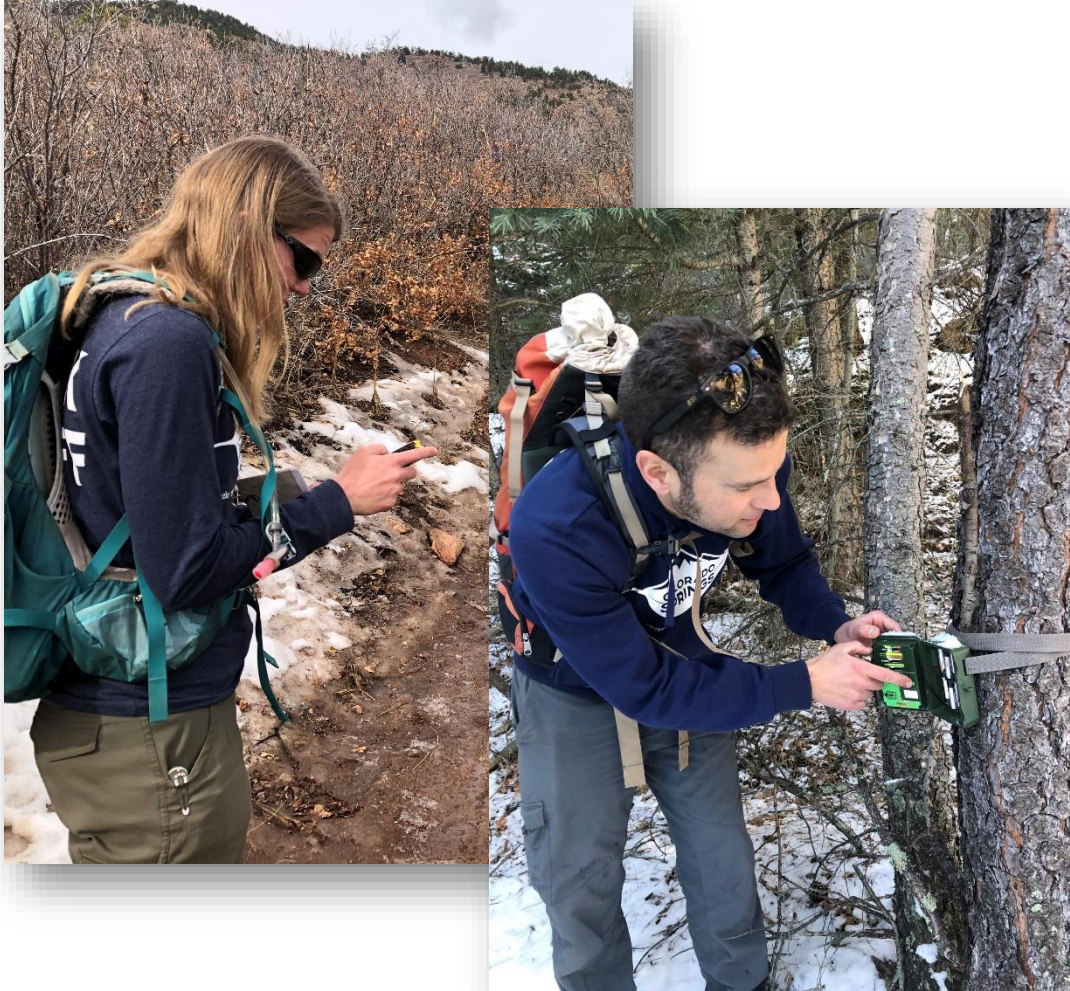


- Presented the award-winning *Traveling Trunks* programming to D11 Elementary Schools
- Assisted with creating a brand new trunk focusing on tree ecology, "Wood You Be-Leaf It?!"
- Updated program content to reflect new Colorado Science Standards
- Led guided nature hikes
- Created scripts for virtual programming
- Updated TOPS interpretive cache
- Attended career fairs
- Created a *Leave No Trace* Activity Booklet to supplement the Junior Ranger Nature program

CREATED BY  
ANNA EICK



# Resource Technicians



- Mapped 78 miles of multi-use trail as part of the Trails Assessment.
- Infrastructure and drainage issues were identified in addition to potential reroute locations.
- Assisted with data collection for the Jacobs Study.
- GIS and map making.
- Wildlife monitoring – game cameras.



# Pivot! Locate Assistance



In February, TOPS Winter '20 seasonal employees switched roles and worked with the Park Facilities Crew to assist with utility location.





# Summer '20 Seasonal Staff



**3 Trail Technicians -** Deborah Ayers (lead), Seth Tyler, Kelsey Calhoun



**2 Biological Technicians -** Kristy Melton, Samuel Richards



# Trail Crew (Trail Technicians)

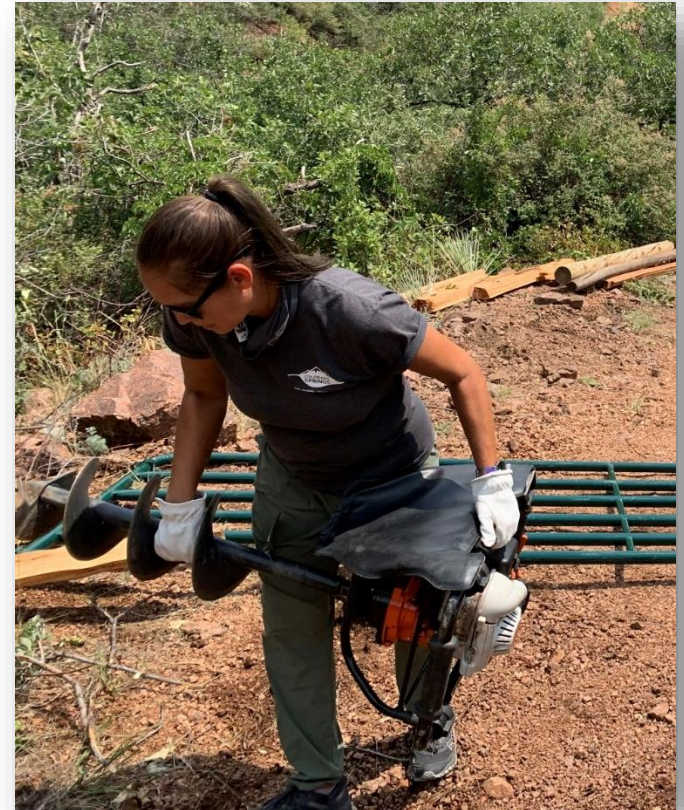


## Responsibilities and percentage of time spent on tasks:

- Trail work, rogue trail restoration, fencing – 48%
- Daily rounds (parking lot inspection, trash removal) - 21%
- Mowing (urban trails, trail heads) – 16%
- Other tasks (volunteer management etc.) – 15%

## Accomplishments:

- 925 feet of trail built
- 700 feet of fencing installed
- 20 steps built
- 31 drainage structures maintained
- 1800 feet of rogue trail restored
- 40 ft<sup>2</sup> of retaining wall built
- 600 feet of trail corridor cleared of vegetation
- 700 feet of trail pruned



# Biological Technicians

## *Natural Resource Management*

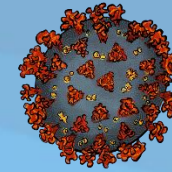


- Migratory Bird Treaty Act Surveys (35 days)
- Avian surveys (360 Point Counts)
- Wildlife monitoring
  - Prairie dog surveys
- Invasive weed mapping
- GIS and map making
- Multiple Myrtle spurge pulls
- BioBlitz and CNC coordination
- Assisted with virtual programming.





# COVID-19 Response



**Incline Attendants and Free  
Reservation System**



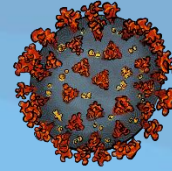
**Public Health Ambassadors**



**Healthyparks.co**



# COVID-19 Response



## Public Health Ambassadors

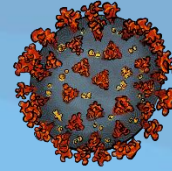
10 employees hired

Training led by Rangers Ogdahl and Tatro



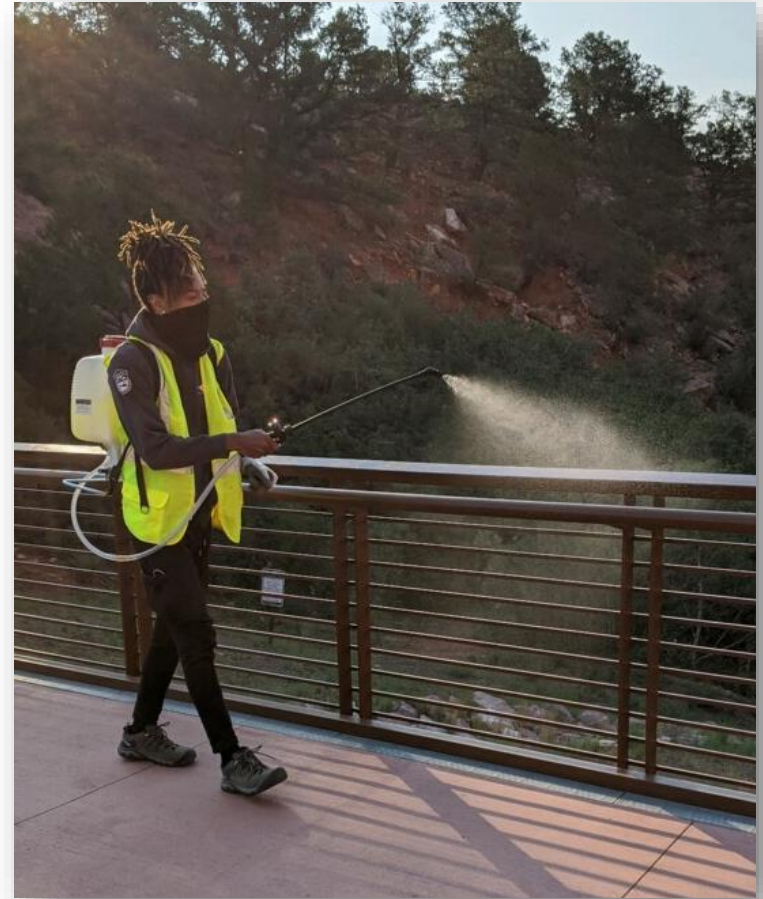


# COVID-19 Response

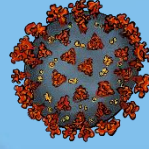


- **Public Health Ambassadors**

- Sanitize high-touch surfaces in parks and open spaces
- Litter removal
- Information on current safety guidelines
- **Target Parks:**
  - Red Rock Canyon Open Space
  - Garden of the Gods Park
  - North Cheyenne Cañon Park
  - Palmer Park



# Free Incline Reservation System (FIRS)



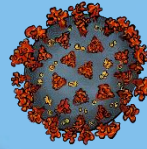
- Started August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- Ended the closure of the Manitou Incline (March 18<sup>th</sup> – August 5<sup>th</sup>)
- Free reservations available using Aluvii software

- 45 people/30 minute session
- 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. (summer)
- 6 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. (winter)





# Free Incline Reservation System (FIRS)



Manitou Incline Reservation - We x +

cityofcoloradosprings.aluvii.com/store/shop/productdetails?id=1&productId=1


Store Categories

Search Products

0 My Cart Login

Store » Categories » Manitou Incline Reservation

## Manitou Incline Reservation



Click to Enlarge

[Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Save](#)

### \$0.00

#### Description :

**Free Reservations Required**

The Manitou Incline is open. **All users are required to make a free reservation online before their hike.** This system is in response to concerns by the Manitou Springs City Council regarding crowding during the COVID-19 pandemic. The reservations will help staff manage the volume of people on the Incline at any given time.

#### Reservation Process

Reservations are open seven days in advance. Be sure to bring your confirmation, either on your phone or printed. City of Colorado Springs Parks' staff will greet you and check you in at the base of the Incline. You will be issued a wristband, which must be worn the entire time you are on the Incline.

- Reservations are available 6 a.m.-6 p.m., April-October, and 6 a.m.-2:30 p.m., November-March. No access permitted after 3 p.m.
- You can reserve more than one slot at a time, however, please only reserve days and times you plan to use. You may also reserve a time slot for another user, but **please limit group reservations to four hikers per time slot.**
- Up to 45 reservations are available for each 30-minute time slot.

#### Preparation and Safety

This is a vigorous and intense hike, complete with a false summit! The trail is recommended for physically active people and those adjusted to the elevation. Although the trail is just one mile in length, it is a 2,000 ft elevation gain straight up a steep, uneven staircase! Are you ready? Plan ahead and prepare!

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Products (0) \$0.00

Discount (+) \$0.00





Enter Code [+ ADD](#)

Sales Tax \$0.00

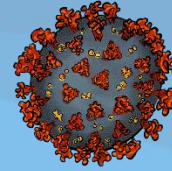
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# COVID-19 Response



## Incline Attendants

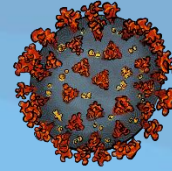
5 employees hired

Training led by Ranger Peddy



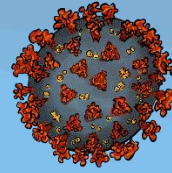


# COVID-19 Response



- **Incline Attendants**
  - Check trail users in at the base of the Manitou Incline
  - Assist with trail inquiries and safety information
  - Keep parking and attendance statistics
  - Interact with visitors from around the world!





LOW TRAFFIC

28



MODERATE TRAFFIC

21



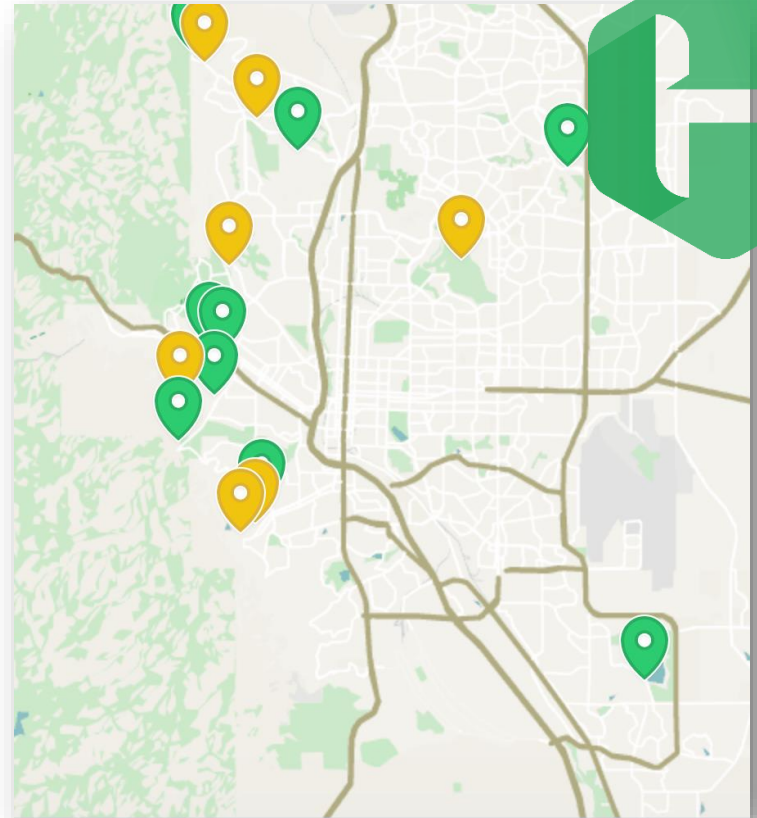
AVOID

6



CLOSED

0





# Law Enforcement



## CSPD Partnership Conservation Patrols

*May - September*

- Dogs Off-Leash
  - 19 Citations (15 from Stratton OS!)
- Scrambling
  - 8 Citations
- Parking Violations
  - 8 Citations

**93.75 hours of patrols, 20 deployments**

## CSPD Vehicle Break-in Patrols (8)

- 30 Contacts
- 3 Felony Arrests



# Interpretation & Education

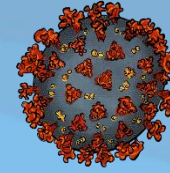


- Traveling Trunks Programming
- TOPS Field Trips (*brand new!*)
- Tabling in TOPS Properties
- Guided Hikes
  - First Day Hikes
  - Families in Winter
  - Prairie Dog Day
  - Nature Journaling
- Family Nature Nights
- Family Fun Science Night
- Touch-A-Truck (1<sup>st</sup> year!)
- National Day of Unplugging
- Night at the Museum
- *Leave No Trace* Programming





# Lost Programming



- ~**6185** contacts lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic
  - 3/16/2020 – 6/22/2020
- 43 pre-scheduled programs and events were cancelled
  - Traveling Trunks & Field Trips
  - PPLD Programs
  - Summer Camp programs
  - CO Get Outdoors Day
  - Stratton Open Space Public BioBlitz
  - Pikes Peak Children's Water Festival
  - Generation Wild programs
  - Family Nature Night

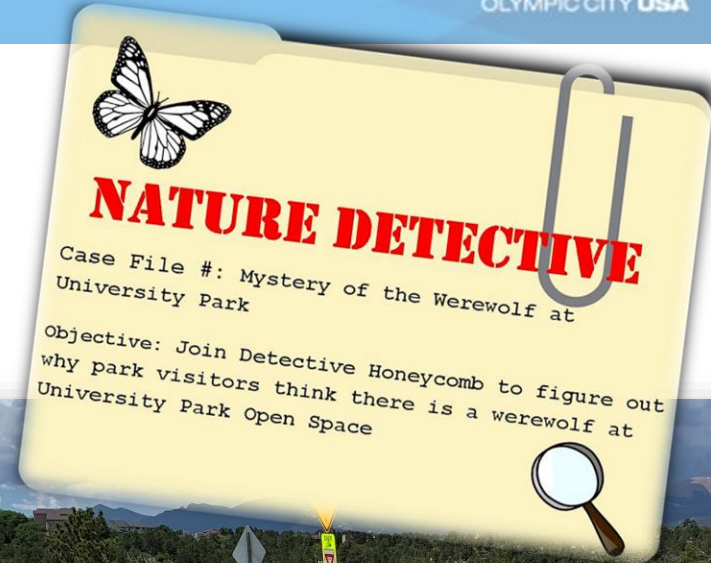


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# Virtual Programming

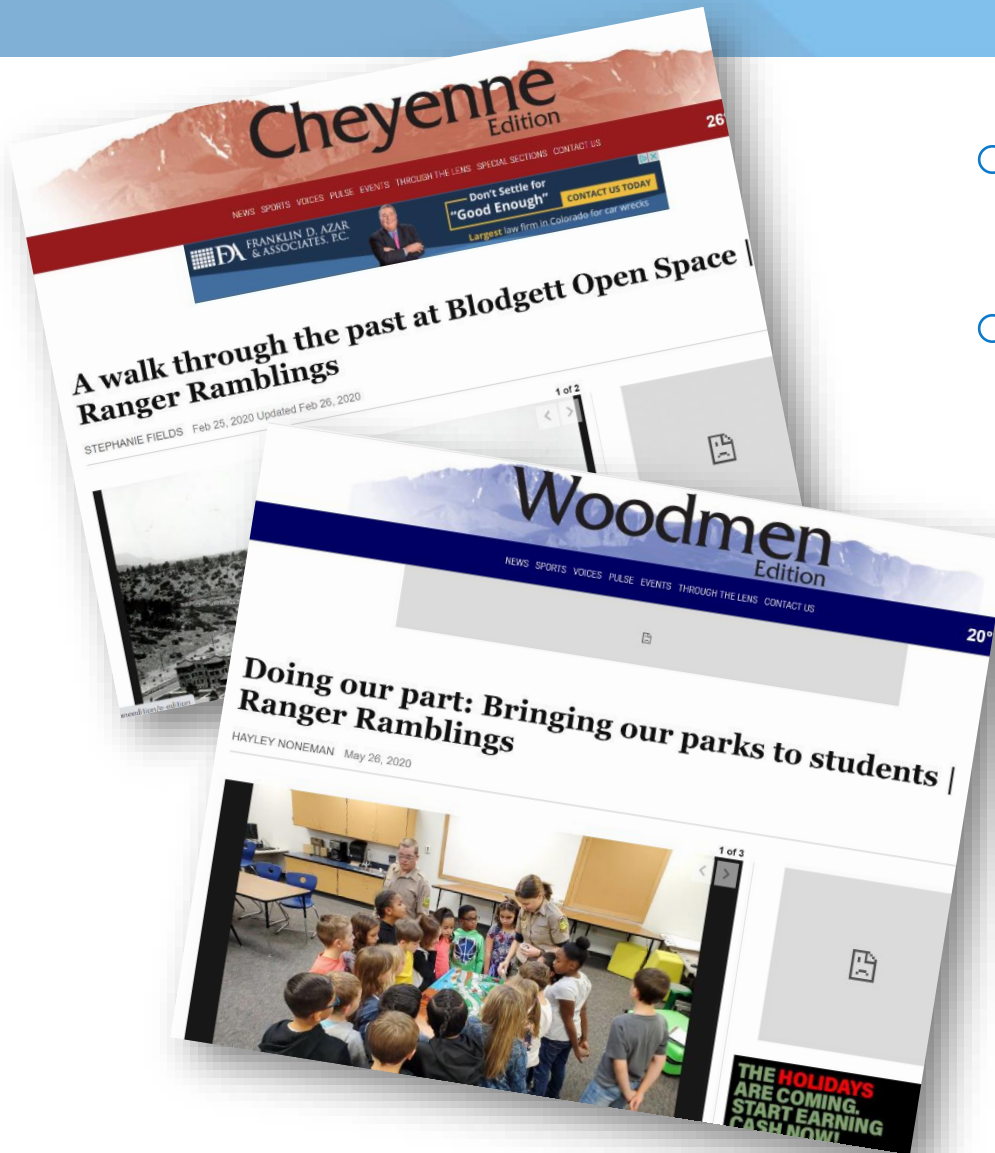


- Traveling Trunks
- Nature Detective
- Zoom Programs for PPLD
- *More to come!*





# Gazette Column



- “Ranger Ramblings” column started in January 2020.
- Published monthly in the Cheyenne and Woodmen Editions of *The Gazette*. Contributions from full time and seasonal staff members.



# Volunteerism



- Led 9 volunteer projects
- Over 213 volunteer hours
- Fort Carson, Friends of RRC, Incline Friends, Friends of Ute Valley Park, Friends of Peregrine Parks, Friends of Stratton Open Space, Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates



# Park Maintenance



- Daily service of trailheads & parking lots
- Trails clear of hazards
- Fence construction
- Sign installation, Gate installation
- Removal of illegal camps & dumped items





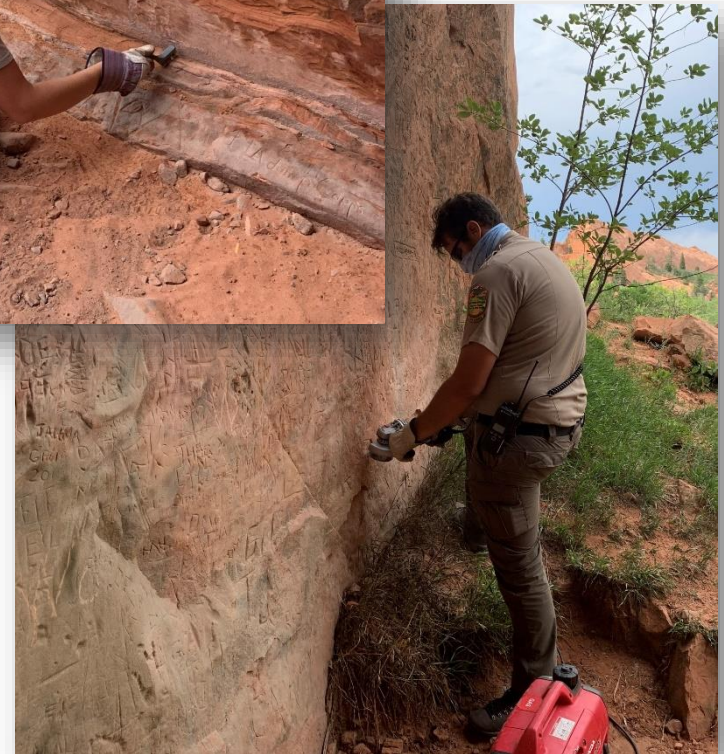
# Park Maintenance



*RRCOS - Unauthorized parking was causing damage to vegetation-  
boulders were placed to prevent unauthorized parking.*



# Cultural Resource Monitoring



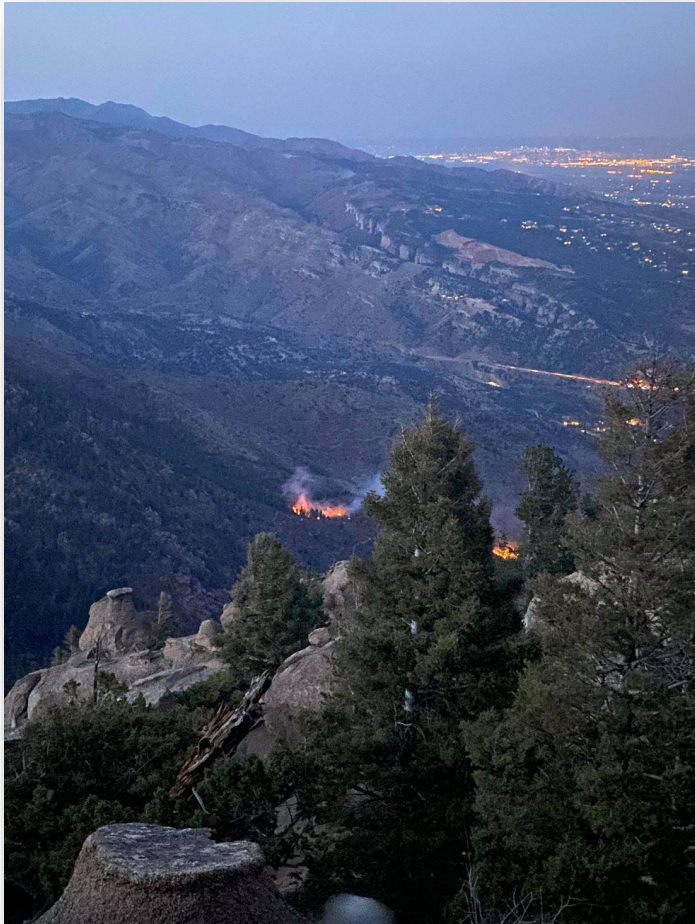
- Archaeological Assessment
  - Historic graffiti at RRCOS
  - Modern graffiti removal



# Fire Response



Incline (Barr Trail) Fire, October 8<sup>th</sup>



Bear Creek Fire, November 19<sup>th</sup>



# New Trails!



## Northern Incline Return Trail



## Meadowlark Loop



# Resource Stewardship Contractors



- FloRide Concepts
  - Meadows Trail @ Stratton, Northern Incline Return Trail
- Singletrack Trails
  - Ridge Trail @ Stratton, Lions Trail @ RRCOS
- Timberline Landscaping
  - Meadowlark Loop
  - Northern Return Trail
- Langston
  - Sand Creek Parking Lot @ RRCOS
- Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI)



# Rocky Mountain Field Institute



The end of the 2020 work season marked  
TOPS' 5<sup>th</sup> year working with RMFI!



**RMFI**

## ○ “Stew Crew” on TOPS Properties

- Construction of 1,057.8 linear feet of new trail
- Improvement of 6.75 linear feet of existing trail
- 63.25 square feet of tread armored
- 16 grade dips built
- 274 square feet of retaining wall installed
- 21,438.5 linear feet of restoration
- 1,411.60 square feet of impacted area restored
- 270 linear feet of fencing installed





# Rocky Mountain Field Institute



- TOPS Properties
  - Red Rock Canyon Open Space
  - Stratton Open Space
  - Ute Valley Park
- Objectives
  - Closure and restoration of rogue trails
  - Erosion control
  - In-trail structures to improve trail durability
  - Trail reroutes



- **75 workdays spent on TOPS properties**
- **156.5 volunteer hours (~\$4,616.75 value!)**
- **Over 2,959 hours invested (staff and volunteer-based)**

# Leave No Trace Stewardship Initiative

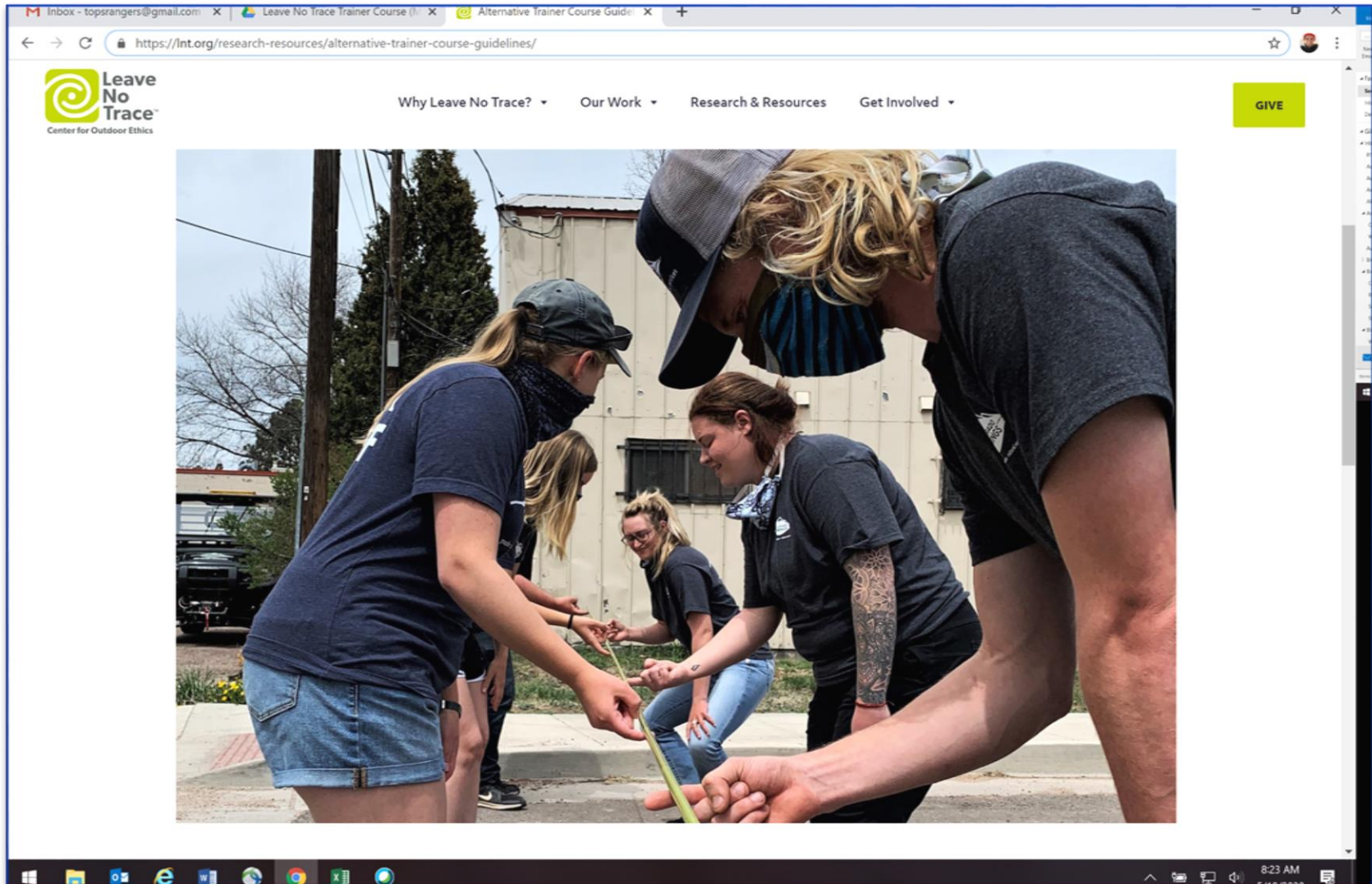


- Hot Spot Week moved to 2021.
- On track to become the **1<sup>st</sup> park system** to earn Gold Standard Site status!
  - Added stewardship language to park signage and websites
  - Increased stewardship programming
  - Youth Accreditation pending
  - Led 8 *Leave No Trace* Trainer Courses
    - 6 virtual courses for partners and advocates





# Leave No Trace Stewardship Initiative



# Leave No Trace Stewardship Initiative



**1<sup>st</sup> Virtual Leave No Trace Trainer Course!**



# TOPS Thanks You!



Great-horned owlets at Bluestem Prairie Open Space  
*Photo by Cody Bear Sutton*